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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006036

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: THE ANNAN PLAN AND UNTYING THE CYPRUS KNOT:  
ANKARA PERSPECTIVES

REF: NICOSIA 1585

(U) Classified by CDA Nancy McEldowney, E.O. 12958, reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) In the aftermath of October 3, there may be an opportunity for us to make a renewed push toward a Cyprus settlement. Though we hesitate to express even guarded optimism, we do believe that the time has come for us to take a hard look at alternative ways forward. We applaud Embassy Nicosia for its efforts (reftel) to stimulate debate on this question. Recognizing Embassy Nicosia is best placed to judge how to influence the Cypriots, we offer the points below as a contribution to what we hope becomes a vigorous review of USG Cyprus policy.

2. (C) Reftel proposes that the USG cease public endorsement of the Annan Plan and stop calling on Greek Cypriots to set forth their objections to it with clarity and finality. We appreciate Embassy Nicosia's points about the difficulty in framing the debate with the Greek Cypriot press and Greek Cypriot hardliners and defer to Nicosia on how to manage that internal debate.

3. (C) However, we believe ceasing public references to the Annan Plan could undercut the UN and invite confusion and discouragement among the wider set of actors on the Cyprus issue:

-- The UN is still publicly anchoring its efforts in the Annan Plan and the need for Greek Cypriots to state their objections to it. This proposed approach would open a gap between the U.S. and the UN -- a first. As stymied as the SYG's Good Offices Mission is, it is currently the only realistic vehicle for overall settlement.

-- The GOT, facing over 60% domestic opposition to the Plan in late 2003, spent political capital, torqued around public opinion, and went on to help bring Turkish Cypriots to yes. Changing our stance now would confuse and anger the GOT and the Turkish public, weaken the hand of pro-solution forces here, and leave the field to conspiracy theories about the reasons for our changed public stance. It also risks damaging support here for Turkey's EU process, since a number of vocal critics see the Negotiating Framework as already having given away the Cyprus store. If we want to lobby Turkey for support for a renewed round of concessions, which we believe would ultimately be desirable, this would not help.

-- We are concerned about how the EU and member states would take our new public lack of support for the Plan. At least, it would be confusing; coming after Turkey's October 3 opening of EU accession talks, some in the EU would interpret this as tacit endorsement of a greater (perhaps exclusive) EU role in settlement.

-- Turkish Cypriots overwhelmingly supported the Annan Plan in 2004. Reftel offers no judgment about what effect ceasing public endorsement of the Plan would have on them.

-- We believe that supporting the Plan in private while ceasing support in public is not a sustainable public diplomacy approach with the audiences with which we have to deal. From our point of view, it is more useful to have a consistent message that we can transmit to all parties concerned.

4. (C) We believe reftel's public diplomacy concerns can be addressed without ceasing public support for the Annan Plan:

-- As far as we can tell, there is unanimous agreement in the USG that the Plan inevitably will be changed. We are aware of no USG public statement to the contrary. As reftel suggests, the USG should publicly state that there will need to be meaningful changes to Annan to accommodate Greek Cypriot concerns -- with the caveat that the Plan will have to be re-opened to changes by both sides, not just one.

-- We agree that we can cease using "uniquely balanced" rhetoric to describe the Plan. Most of the Plan's basic concepts have been considered in one form or another for decades and all appear open to adjustments to the details.

-- We agree it is unhelpful to debate whether the Plan is "a

basis," "point of departure" or "point of reference." Under any construction, we should stress that the SYG needs to know what Greek Cypriots want, and his assessment is that the Greek Cypriots have not adequately set that forth.

15. (C) All this is preliminary to what we hope will be a collective effort to see whether the post-October 3 period offers a window to move forward constructively with all parties on Cyprus. Mission Turkey looks forward to participating actively in this discussion.  
MCELDOWNEY